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Lopez, Donna

From: Carolyn [mc.shipley@verizon.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 07, 2013 10:09 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna; vanBeuzekom, Minka; craig@craigkelley.org; tim.toomey@aol.com; Toomey, Tim (home); Davis, Henrietta (home); Decker, Marjorie; Maher, David; Reeves, Ken; cpi195 @aol.com; Cheung, Leland
Subject: Reasons to Reject the current version of MITIMCO petition

4/7/2013
To the Honorable City Council:

In the last several weeks, and especially this past Saturday at the Winter Farmers Market, I have been talking with scores of Cambridge voters who have lived in Cambridge for 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years or their whole life.

These Cambridge voters are saying that they do not like the MITIMCO proposal/petition as it is now written.

These Cambridge voters are not happy that the City Council is not asking for MIT-provided housing for its grad students.

These Cambridge voters are concerned that the demand on Cambridge housing stock by these MIT grad students will drive Cambridge residents/voters out of Cambridge where they have lived for most of their lives.

These Cambridge voters are concerned that the MITIMCO petition does not provide many affordable units. They all said that MIT with its billions in endowment could certainly give more to the city in the way of affordable housing and housing for their grad students.

These Cambridge voters point to the other universities in Cambridge and just across the river in Boston that DO provide grad student housing.

And, finally, these Cambridge voters were surprised to learn that MIT, the folks whose Net-Zero technology is used in other countries, will not be using this technology for this huge expansion that they plan.

Many Cambridge voters want a small garden plot to raise vegetables. Some city councillors are always pushing us to do organic gardening, go green, to patronize farmers markets, to join up for farmers to us, etc., yet there is only one city councillor who asked MIT to set aside some little corner of that huge 26 acre plan for the neighborhood to raise organic vegetables. And MIT refused.

For the above reasons, and in order to keep Carnbridge for Cambridge residents, I urge that you reject the MITIMCO petition as it now stands and that MITIMCO be encouraged to provide housing for grad students and many more affordable units than in the current proposal.

Carolyn Shipley
15 Laurel St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Lopez, Donna

From: Carolyn [mc.shipley@verizon.net]
Sent: Monday, April 08, 2013 12:27 PM
To: Craig@CraigKelley.org
Cc: Lopez, Donna; City Council
Subject: Rents Going up for Cambridge Voters? MIT Grad Students adding to the Pressure?

Hi Craig, My apologies if it seemed that I ignored the content of your message. What I wanted to emphasize is:
>>Everyone I spoke with at the Farmers Market on Saturday, all of the neighbors I spoke with on my door-knocking travels this week, all are upset with the demand students put on rents and how rents are going up and up.

That was the message in my message, yet I felt your response did not seem to address it.

There was not one Cambridge resident/voter I spoke to who said they wanted MIT to build up, up, and up. There are many reasons to be concerned about this density, in fact, too many to go into detail here, and that is not the topic of my message today, and besides, many residents have already voiced those concerns in earlier hearings.

But: Grad student housing is the concern of most voters, although I do not have the time today to look up the numbers and, most importantly, the percentages of grad students housed by Harvard, BU, Lesley, or NorthEastern, versus MIT.
Not that anyone is picking on MIT specifically, all grad students city-wide cause rents to go up astronomically and grad students as well as undergrads take up the available housing stock thus depriving long-time Cambridge families of an affordable place to live. However, an MIT official stated in a recent hearing that the purpose of adding more educational opportunities is to attract more grad students! (Emphasis mine.)

Further, data on the number of grad students is needed in order to come up with percentages that can be used to compare.
If you have information on grad student housing, I would welcome having it. Also, data on the number of rentals available in the MIT campus area versus the number of rentals available in the Harvard U. area would be necessary to make meaningful judgments.

Regards,
Carolyn

On 04/08/13, Craig Kelley<craigkelley62@verizon.net> wrote:

Carolyn:

There is a difference between ignoring emails and disagreeing with someone's opinion. Do you know how many MIT grad students MIT houses compares to Harvard in number and percentage-wise? MIT compares favorably in the latter.

Craig

From: Carolyn [mailto:mc.shipley@verizon.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 07, 2013 4:44 PM
To: Craig@CraigKelley.org
Subject: Re: RE: Housing question

Hello Craig, I'm afraid you missed entirely the import of my message.

No one wants the grad students to take up Cambridge rental units.

Everyone I have talked to, yesterday at the Winter Farmers Market, and in my travels around the neighborhoods passing out the newsletter, ***Neighborhood Voices***, is up in arms about the K2C2 movement by theCity, and they all find the Central Square Advisory Committee to be a big joke, athough a scary joke.

Not one of the voters I spoke with wants this pressure on neighborhood rentals.

You should be receiving a number of emails tomorrow from voters against the MIT petition. If the city council ignores the wishes of the voters, they could very well see a organized movement to replace as many as possible.

If you and the rest of your colleagues ignore all these email messages from long-time Cambridge voters, and ignore the testimony that you will hear tomorrow, it will be a big insult to us.

The Round Table where a vote was taken before public testimony was enough of an insult to voters.

Again, let me say this, Harvard provides grad student housing. MIT should provide grad housing.

Regarding the garden, it was Councillor VanBeuzekom's request and was reported in the Cambridge Chronicle last Thursday. I hope you read it. If you recall, Peggy Lynch she spoke up for a community garden as well.

On 04/07/13, Craig Kelley<craigkelley62@verizon.net> wrote:

Carolyn:

I appreciate your support on many of my stances. In regard to your comments below:

1. It's in the zoning code. No more than 3 unrelated people. We can enforce it, change it or ignore it, but it's there.

2. Grad students are vastly older than undergrads and schools have a different set of responsibilities towards them and their expectations on how to live are generally different. I think a university is rightly more concerned with the younger, less worldy (in general) undergrads.

3. If nothing else, they help a lot of people pay rent. I think they also keep a lot of coffee shops open, though I'm less sure about that. More expensive establishments, maybe, maybe not.

4. I hadn't heard about the garden issue before.

5. I don't think MIT's housing review is going to tell us much, if anything, we don't already pretty much know and I don't think its results will change MIT's thoughts on what it should or shouldn't do.

Finally, I really think this is going to pass tomorrow night. When more rezoning proposals are on the table for properties closer to our residential neighborhoods, I'd like to think the proponents consider me someone whose views they should consider rather than an automatic "no" they can discount. I have no problem voting against things or for things all by my lonesome, but I don't see the justification for doing here.

Thanks for reading my return rant. ☺

Craig

From: Carolyn [mailto:mc.shipley@verizon.net]
Sent: Saturday, April 06, 2013 10:39 PM
To: craig@craigkelley.org
Subject: Housing question

Hi Craig, MITIMCO lack of housing. Please know that I support your stance of many issues. Unfortunately, on this one, I do not.

>>You mention that the city has an ordinance against 3 unrelated people sharing a rental unit. Huh?

If that were enforced, and, if landlords knew about it in the first place, which they don't, more than 85% of the rentals to college students in this city would be illegal. What a unrealistic ordinance, not unlike a lot of city ordinances.

First of all, there would have to be rental units with 3 or 4 bedrooms in order for 3 or more unrelated individuals to share a unit.

There aren't many. Let me put it another way: there are darn few.

RE: Your comment about not wanting to create by fiat a grad housing community:

>>Most colleges and universities house their undergrads on campus in housing called dorms.

>>Undergraduates are students.

>>Therefore, housing students on campus does not by fiat create a student housing community. (I sure hope I got that syllogism right.)

Why is housing undergrads on campus not wrong, while grad housing on campus is wrong?

With respect, I don't agree that grad students bring neat things to the neighborhood either.

They don't have time to learn about the city, they don't have knowledge of the history of city, they don't know their neighbors, they don't join neighborhood associations (they don't have the time or interest, since they'll be moving on soon), and they don't have the money to rent a market rate apartment unless they share with 3 or 4 other unrelated persons.

They study long hours or work in labs for long hours and do not have the time to become acquainted with their neighbors, let alone their neighborhood. Their neighborhood is back home in Wichita, or Harriburg, or Schnectady, or Scarsdale.

Lastly, they don't have the extra pocket money to patronize city restaurants, night clubs, etc.

Yet, the high number of grad students and post-docs looking for housing produce a high demand which then jacks the rents up, which then makes the rentals unaffordable unless they do share with 3 or 4 others.

Harvard provides married grad student housing. That at least relieves some of the pressure.

It seems to me, if I read your hypothesis correctly, it assumes that all grad students and post-docs are unmarried individuals, when, in fact, they are not. I don't have the numbers at hand, but most of the grad students and post-docs to whom I have rented, and my neighbors have rented, are married couples.

(Some even had a toddler or two.)

I cannot accept the lack of graduate student housing in the current MITIMCO petition, nor the measly amount of affordable units they will build.

Another issue (like the bike lane marking issue) on which some city councillors expend much talk, is growing native, growing organic here in the city, yet not many on the council (um, except Minka, I believe) seem to want to pressure MIT for space for a community garden. >>>>It is not clear to me where the grow native councillors expect that residents will doing this growing.

MIT has been studying the issue of graduate student housing and will have a report ready by July. It doesn't make sense to pass this petition that ignores the issue of grad student housing before the MIT study ordered by Provost Kaiser is issued.

If fact, one could theorize that MITIMCO planned it that way.

>>>I urge you to consider letting this petition expire or voting on the side of Cambridge residents by rejecting this version of the MITIMCO petition. I would hate to see my long-time neighbors priced out of their apartments.

Thank you for taking the time to read my long rant.

Regards,

Carolyn

Carolyn Shipley

15 Laurel St.

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